

OUR FOREIGN FIELDS

# JAPAN

BOARD OF FOREIGN MISSIONS OF  
THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

DECEMBER, 1911

## THE BULWARK OF THE FAR EAST

If you imagine the chain of islands that make up the Empire of Japan lying off the eastern coast of the United States, it would extend from above Maine to Cuba. But though the chain is over 2,000 miles long, the average width of the islands is less than 100 miles and the total area, including Formosa, is but 161,000 square miles, or only slightly larger than California.

But while California, with an area only two or three thousand square miles smaller than Japan, has a population of 2,400,000, Japan contains 52,000,000 people, or about 322 people to the square mile, a density of population about equal to that in Great Britain.

There are four principal islands in the Japan group—Hondo, Shikoku, Kiushiu and the Hokkaido—together with Formosa, which Japan annexed in 1895, after the war with China, and about 4,000 smaller islands. In 1910 Japan annexed Korea, over which she had held a protectorate since the close of the Russo-Japanese war, in 1905.

Japan forms an island rampart which circles the coast of Asia from Siberia to Southern China. Thus her geographical position is one of the factors by which she is destined to be a leader in the Orient. It has been said that China is going to school to Japan. Thousands of young Chinese students are being trained in Tokyo. Japan's influence in Korea will determine largely the future of that land.

## A NON-CHRISTIAN WORLD POWER

Japan is the astonishing nation of the modern world. In fifty years she has risen from utter seclusion to become one of the great world powers. Nor does it appear that she has reached the climax of her success. When we think of a nation of more than fifty millions, all of one race, intensely patriotic, of the most industrious habits, temperate, imitative and progressive, with a system of education almost as complete as any in the world, with over 96 per cent of children of school age enrolled in school, with a determination to find and apply the very best methods to their political and industrial undertakings—we cannot but see that the Japan of the future will be a rival with which the strongest nations of the earth must reckon.

That the Empire of Japan is largely Christianized is far from true. In the population of 52,000,000 there are only about 300,000 Christians, counting all ages, all sorts of belief (including Greek Catholics and Roman Catholics), and all adherents or inquirers and members of Christian families. This is about one to every 172 non-Christians, or about six in each thousand of the population. There are only about 75,000 declared Protestant church members in the country. Buddhism, Confucianism, Shintoism, and (among many of the students) complete agnosticism still hold sway among more than 50,000,000 of the Japanese.

## THE JAPAN METHODIST CHURCH

In 1907 the Japanese churches of three branches of American Methodism were united to form the independent Japan Methodist Church, with Bishop Yoitsu Honda, formerly of the Methodist Episcopal Mission, at its head.

Methodist missionaries feel no restraint or embarrassment in their work in Japan since the organization of the independent church. One of them writes: "The old missionaries are honored and their counsel and cooperation in every kind of work constantly sought for and relied upon. The new missionaries are taken immediately into the confidence of the Japanese."

The need of generous support from the home church for our work in Japan has not lessened since the formation of the Japan Methodist Church, but rather increased with the growth of our institutions and the widening horizon of our work. The Japan Methodist Church is poor, and though it is making heroic efforts to carry as much of the burden as possible it is not yet self-supporting and must be helped. It is entirely without means to extend its work. Hence any pioneer work that is to be done, any establishment of new church centers, must be done for the most part by the missionaries and with missionary funds. Moreover, our responsibility for our large institutions—schools and publishing house—was not affected by the formation of the independent church.

## THE OPPORTUNITIES OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

The Methodist Episcopal Church has in Japan two large academic schools for boys and young men, one at Nagasaki and the other at Tokyo—the latter furnishing a regular college course. In these schools more than a thousand boys and young men from all parts of Japan are being saturated with Christian teaching.

The final work of evangelizing Japan must be done by Japanese preachers. These are being educated in our Theological School, in Tokyo, which is hampered by its lack of funds.

The Methodist Publishing House, in Tokyo, the only general publishing plant in the country under special missionary direction, turns out from its presses about 5,000,000 pages per month, prints a score of periodicals, employs 100 men regularly and does a large business in the sale of books and tracts. It makes its own type and does printing in eight different languages. If it had sufficient equipment to do English printing on a large scale for the foreign community in Japan it could become a source of income to the Methodist Mission. But for this purpose it needs new appliances.

Since the annexation of Korea Japanese have been flocking to Korea at the rate of more than 250 a day. Among the Japanese in Korea the Japan Methodist Church is carrying on a successful work. Funds are needed for a good church building for this work in Seoul.

The Board of Foreign Missions has only one missionary family in all of the Hokkaido (the northernmost of the four main islands of Japan), with its rapidly increasing population. The Hokkaido is being rapidly opened up and settled by emigrants from all parts of the empire. These people have broken with their old associations and are now most accessible to the gospel.

In the Liuchiu Islands is just one Methodist Episcopal missionary family, with a parish of 540,000 people, presenting a field for Christian work twice as large as the Hawaiian Islands. In the island of Kiushiu two families are responsible for the evangelization of 2,500,000 people. Of the 63 cities and towns in Kiushiu, with a population above 5,000, thirty have no Christian worker of any description.

## WHAT SMALL SUMS WILL DO

\$25 to \$40 will give a preparatory student one year's education.

\$30 to \$60 will give a college student one year's education.

\$60 to \$100 will support a Japanese pastor one year.

\$250 will build a chapel.

\$750 to \$1,500 will build a church.

\$1,500 will build a Japanese Mission Home.

Larger sums are needed for larger and more permanent buildings.

Send the money to the Missionary Secretaries,  
150 Fifth Avenue, New York city.